

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Paragraph bridging pages 9 and 10, please amend as follows:

FIG. 1 and FIG. 2A show a maintenance apparatus according to the first embodiment of the present invention. The maintenance apparatus 10 has a metal or plastic housing 11. The housing 11 includes a holder section 13 for holding medical handpieces, for example, dental handpieces 12, a supply section 14 for supplying a maintenance fluid (e.g., a liquid, a gas or a mixture thereof) such as a washing liquid and a lubricant, a delivery section [[16]] 15 for feeding the maintenance fluid from the supply section 14 to the handpieces 12 and controlling the feeding, and a recycling section 16 for collecting the maintenance fluid used for the washing of the handpieces 12.

Paragraph bridging pages 15, 16 and 17, please amend as follows:

The delivery section 15 comprises a control unit [[80]] 280 (see FIG. 10) which controls the feeding of the maintenance fluid to the maintenance apparatus 10, and a circuit (see FIG. 8) which connects the liquid-supply containers 57 and 58 and the compressed air supply source 60 to the handpiece 12. The control unit [[80]] 280 controls the feeding of the maintenance fluid to the chucking structure 52. The control unit [[80]] 280 may be used to control not only the feeding of the maintenance fluid to the chucking structure but also the feeding of the maintenance fluid to the bearings 48 and 49. By doing so, the maintenance of all the parts of the handpiece can be automatically performed, so that effective and reliable maintenance of the handpiece can be realized. As seen in the circuit 84 shown in FIG. 8, an air passage (a pipe) 61 connected to the air filter 59 is equipped with a decompression device 62 in the vicinity of the proximal end thereof connected to the air filter 59, and the distal end portion of the pipe 61 is split into a plurality of air passing branched pipes 62a to 62d (four branched pipes in this embodiment) which are equipped with valves (electromagnetic valves) 63a to 63d, respectively, and which are connected at their distal ends to connectors 64a to 64d secured on the upper side of the lid 23, respectively. The connectors 64a to 64d are engaged with the common adaptors 29 and are connected thereto, when the lid 23 is closed (see FIG. 2A). Likewise, a liquid passage (a pipe) 65 connected to the first liquid-supply container 57 is equipped with a valve (an electromagnetic valve) 66, at and around its proximal end side connected to the container 57, and the distal end side of the pipe 65 is split into a plurality of

liquid-passing branched pipes 67a to 67c (three branched pipes in this embodiment), which are equipped with valves (electromagnetic valves) 68a to 68c, respectively, and which are connected at their distal ends to the air passing branched pipes 62a to 62c and merged therewith, respectively, between the valves for the air (the electromagnetic valves) 63a to 63c and the connectors 64a to 64c. One liquid passage (a pipe) 69 connected to the second liquid supply container 58 is equipped with a valve (an electromagnetic valve) 70, at and around its proximal end side connected to the container 58, and is connected at its distal end side to the remaining air passing branched pipe 62d and merged therewith, between the valve 63d for the air and the connector 64d. Again referring to FIG. 8, a handpiece 12' is an air scaler handpiece which is not equipped with any rotary tool, namely, any chucking structure. Accordingly, a washing nozzle 40 is not needed for this handpiece, and therefore, the adaptor 33 corresponding to the handpiece 12' is not equipped with a washing nozzle.

Paragraph bridging pages 19, 20 and 21, please amend as follows:

When the start switch (not shown) of the operation unit [[82]] 282 shown in FIG. 10 is pressed down in this state, the valves 63a to 63d and the valves 68a to 68c provided on the branched pipes 62a to 62d and the branched pipes 67a to 67d which are connected the passages connected to the handpieces 12 are controlled to open or close, in response to a signal from the control unit [[80]] 280, as shown in FIG. 9. As a result, the liquids (the washing liquid and the lubricant) supplied from the liquid supply containers 57 and 58 are mixed with a compressed air supplied from the compressed air supply source 60, and a mixture of these fluids is fed to the handpieces 12. Then, as shown in FIG. 4, a part of the fluid mixture is fed to the third feeding passage 43 formed in each of the handpieces 12, from the second feeding passage 36 formed in each of the individual adaptors 33, and is injected to the bearings 48 and 49 and the rotatable member 47 in the head of the handpiece, so as to wash off the foreign matters from the bearings 48 and 49 and the rotatable member 47 and lubricate them. While a part of the injected fluid mixture flows into a chamber between the bearings 48 and 49 and outgoes, most of the injected fluid mixture is finally led to the bottom of the container 17, after passing through the third recycling passage 44 in the handpiece 12, the second recycling passage 37 in the individual adaptor 33, the first recycling passage 31 in the common adaptor 29, the sealed chamber 28 of the lid 23 and the liquid-recycling pipe 32.

In the meantime, a part of the fluid mixture is injected in the form of mist from the injection holes 41 and 42 of the nozzle 40, into the chucking structure 59, after passing through the second feeding passage 36 of the individual adaptor 33 and the branched tube 38, so that the chucking structure 52 is washed and lubricated by the injected fluid mixture. Then, the fluid mixture injected into the chucking structure 52 flows around the nozzle 40 and goes out of the proximal end side of the nozzle 40 and drops into the bottom of the container 17. While the pressure of the fluid fed from the third feeding passage 43 imparts a turning force to the rotatable member 47, the nozzle 40 held by the chucking structure 52 formed integrally with the rotatable member 47 is unrotatable, so that the rotatable member 47 is not rotated.

Page 21, second full paragraph, please amend as follows:

In this connection, when a groove 81 or a ridge [[82]] 282 is formed on the outer wall of the nozzle 40 as shown in FIG. 5B or 5C, a passage 83 or 84 along which the fluid flows to the proximal end of the nozzle 40 is formed between the outer wall of the nozzle 40 and the inner wall of the chucking structure 52. By doing so, the fluid is caused to more smoothly flow along the passage 83 or 84. Therefore, the efficient feeding and discharge of the fluid becomes possible, and the washing effect by the fluid is improved.

Page 27, first full paragraph, please amend as follows:

The switch 146 is connected to a control unit 200 which is of the same type as that of the control unit [[80]] 280 described in the first embodiment, and the control unit 200 decides whether or not the handpiece 150 is connected to the second fluid supply 122, based on a signal transmitted from the switch 146.